



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

SHELL OIL COMPANY
P O BOX 2463
HOUSTON TX 77252-2463

COPY MAILED

SEP 13 2005

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Knifton, et al.
Application No. 10/790,598
Filed: March 1, 2004
Attorney Docket No. TH1615 02(US)

:
:DECISION ON PETITIONS
:UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(3)
:AND 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6)
:

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR §§ 1.78(a)(3) and 1.78(a)(6), filed October 22, 2004 (certificate of mailing date October 19, 2004), to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and 119(e) for the benefit of the prior-filed nonprovisional and provisional applications set forth in the concurrently filed amendment.

The petition is **DISMISSED AS MOOT**.

A petition under 37 CFR §§ 1.78(a)(3) and 1.78(a)(6) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000.

Along with the instant petition under 37 CFR §§ 1.78(a)(3) and 1.76(a)(6), petitioner has submitted an amendment to the first sentence of the specification following the title to include a reference to the prior-filed applications.

The instant pending nonprovisional application was filed on March 1, 2004, and was pending at the time of filing of the instant petition. While a reference to the prior-filed applications was not included in an ADS or in the first sentence of the specification following the title, reference nevertheless was made in the transmittal letter and oath/declaration filed with the above-identified application.

The current procedure where a claim for priority under 37 CFR §§ 1.78(a)(3) and 1.78(a)(6) is not included in the first sentence of the specification or in an ADS but does appear either in the oath or declaration or a transmittal letter filed with the application and the Office notes the claim for priority, no petition will be required to accept a late claim for priority. This is because the application would have been scheduled for publication on the basis of the information concerning the claim submitted elsewhere in the application within the time period set forth in 37 CFR §§ 1.78(a)(2)(ii) and 1.78(a)(5)(ii). However, on the other hand, if the USPTO does not note the claim for priority to the prior-filed application(s) set forth in the oath or declaration or transmittal

letter submitted with the application, a petition will be required to accept a late claim for priority under 37 CFR §§ 1.78(a)(3) and 1.78(a)(6).¹ In the instant case, the Office noted the claim for priority of the prior-filed applications in the transmittal letter and oath/declaration filed with the application, as shown by their inclusion on the filing receipt.

In view of the above, the \$130.00 petition fee submitted is unnecessary and will be refunded to petitioner's deposit account in due course.

Any questions concerning this decision on petition may be directed to Petitions Attorney E. Shirene Willis at (571) 272-3230. All other inquiries concerning either the examination procedures or status of the application should be directed to the Technology Center.

This application is being forwarded to the Examiner of Technology Center AU 1754, but the amendment filed with the present petition will not be entered. Petitioner is informed that the amendment filed with the present petition is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference prior application no. 60/291,827. A substitute amendment is required. Application No. 10/146,675 was incorporated by reference in this application's transmittal letter. However, application no. 60/291,827 was **not** incorporated by reference on this application's filing date.

Petitioner's attention is directed to Dart Industries v. Banner, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980), where the court drew a distinction between a permissible 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement and the impermissible introduction of new matter by way of incorporation by reference in a 35 U.S.C. § 120 statement. The court specifically stated:

Section 120 merely provides a mechanism whereby an application becomes entitled to benefit of the filing date of an earlier application disclosing the same subject matter. Common subject matter must be disclosed, in both applications, either specifically or by an express incorporation-by-reference of prior disclosed subject matter. Nothing in section 120 itself operates to carry forward any disclosure from an earlier application. In re deSeversky, *supra* at 674, 177 USPQ at 146-147. Section 120 contains no magical disclosure-augmenting powers able to pierce new matter barriers. It cannot, therefore, "limit" the absolute and express prohibition against new matter contained in section 251.

¹ Note MPEP 201.11 (III)(D), pages 200-59 and 200-60 (Rev. 2. May 2004) and 66 Federal Register 67087 at 67089 (Dec. 28, 2001), effective December 28, 2001.

The above analysis applies to section 119 statements. MPEP 201.11. Petitioner should submit an amendment that eliminates the incorporation by reference language with respect to application no. 60/291,827.



Frances Hicks

Lead Petitions Examiner
Office of Petitions
Office of the Deputy Commissioner
for Patent Examination Policy¹
